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to considerable trouble to help men like Evans who were trying to make this literature more accessible.⁷ He was one of the subscribers to the *Gorchestion*, and it is more than likely that, knowing Johnson's interest in Welsh, he should attempt to secure his help toward the publication of a book which contained so much of the best of the early Welsh literature.

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THE AUTHORISED VERSION'S INFLUENCE UPON MILTON'S DICTION

The famous passage in *Paradise Lost* (VII, 224-231), in which Milton represents Deity as circumscribing the limits of the universe by means of the golden compasses "prepared in God's eternal store," has given much trouble to commentators anxious to defend Milton against the charge of being too material. Addison, for example, declared that the golden compasses "appear a very natural instrument in the hand of him whom Plato somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician."

Such desperate attempts to defend Milton against a charge that cannot be disproved seem the more absurd when we find that the passage (*Prov.* VIII, 27) upon which Milton relied for his authority, does not mention the compasses. The Hebrew words literally mean 'He set a circle on the face of the deep.' Here the word "circle" (Heb. *khug*) refers to the base of the solid vault of the heavens. This vault was thought of as a solid dome (*Job* XXII, 14) resting on the sea, its base forming the circle of the horizon on its surface.

Though compasses were used by the Hebrews, being mentioned in connection with the making of idols (*Is.* XLIV, 13), Milton could have found no Biblical precedent for the supernatural dividers from the celestial tool-chest. We are forced to conclude, therefore, that, notwithstanding his knowledge of Hebrew, Milton was misled by the wording of the Authorised Version, which renders, "He set a compass upon the face of the deep."

Equally demonstrable is the influence of the Authorised Version upon both the thought and diction of Milton's sonnet "On the late Massacre in Piemont." Here the "Babylonian woe" of the last line has usually been explained as the pope, here identified as the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. So Waburton interprets it, and Warton confirms his judgment, reminding us that Milton elsewhere (*In Quint. Nov.* 156) calls the pope *antistes Babylonius*, the Babylonian priest. Masson points out that the Puritans identified the papacy with the mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse, and refers us to *Rev.* XVII and XVIII.

⁷ *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*. Ab Owen, Llanuwchllyn, 1912, pp. 14, 25, 33.

While unquestionably Milton did believe the apocalyptic Babylon stood for the papacy, the scriptural source of the phrase "Babylonian woe" was probably not *Rev.* xvii and xviii, but *Jer.* li. The latter was the source of the passage in *Revelations*, and was similarly interpreted by the Puritan divines. Here the prophet uses Babylon as a type of worldly power, self-deifying, and the enemy of God. In verses 25-26 he employs the symbol of the volcano. Babylon, the "destroying mountain" is to become an extinct, or burnt out, volcano, whose vitrified stones are not even fit for building material. To this mountain God is represented as saying, "I will roll thee down from the rocks." The phrasing of the threat, so nearly identical with that of the seventh and eighth lines of the sonnet, suggests that in Milton's mind the retribution to be visited upon the papacy, namely the "Babylonian woe," was to duplicate the cruel policy of extermination hitherto countenanced by the Roman church. Milton meant to suggest the threat which Jeremiah expressly utters (*Jer.* li, 24), "I will render unto Babylon . . . all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord."

The passage in *Jeremiah* not only throws light on what Milton meant by the "Babylonian woe," but accounts for the peculiar and otherwise unaccountable, use of the word "roll'd" in line seven—

. Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks.

The influence of the Authorised Version seems, therefore, to be apparent, not only upon the thought, but upon the diction as well.

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A NOTE ON THE *Comedy of Errors*

Critics and editors of the *Comedy of Errors* uniformly assert that Shakespeare got no hint of the pathos of Ægeon's situation from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, which is Shakespeare's main source. May it not be, however, that Shakespeare who is extremely sensitive to suggestion did get a cue from lines 34 to 36 of the prose prologue to Plautus' play?

The lines cited read as follows in the text of Professor Nixon (*Loeb Classical Library, Plautus*, II, p. 368) :

Pater eius autem postquam puerum perdidit,
Animum despondit, eaque is aegritudine
Paucis diebus post Tarenti emortuost.

Professor Nixon translates these thus: "As for the father, after